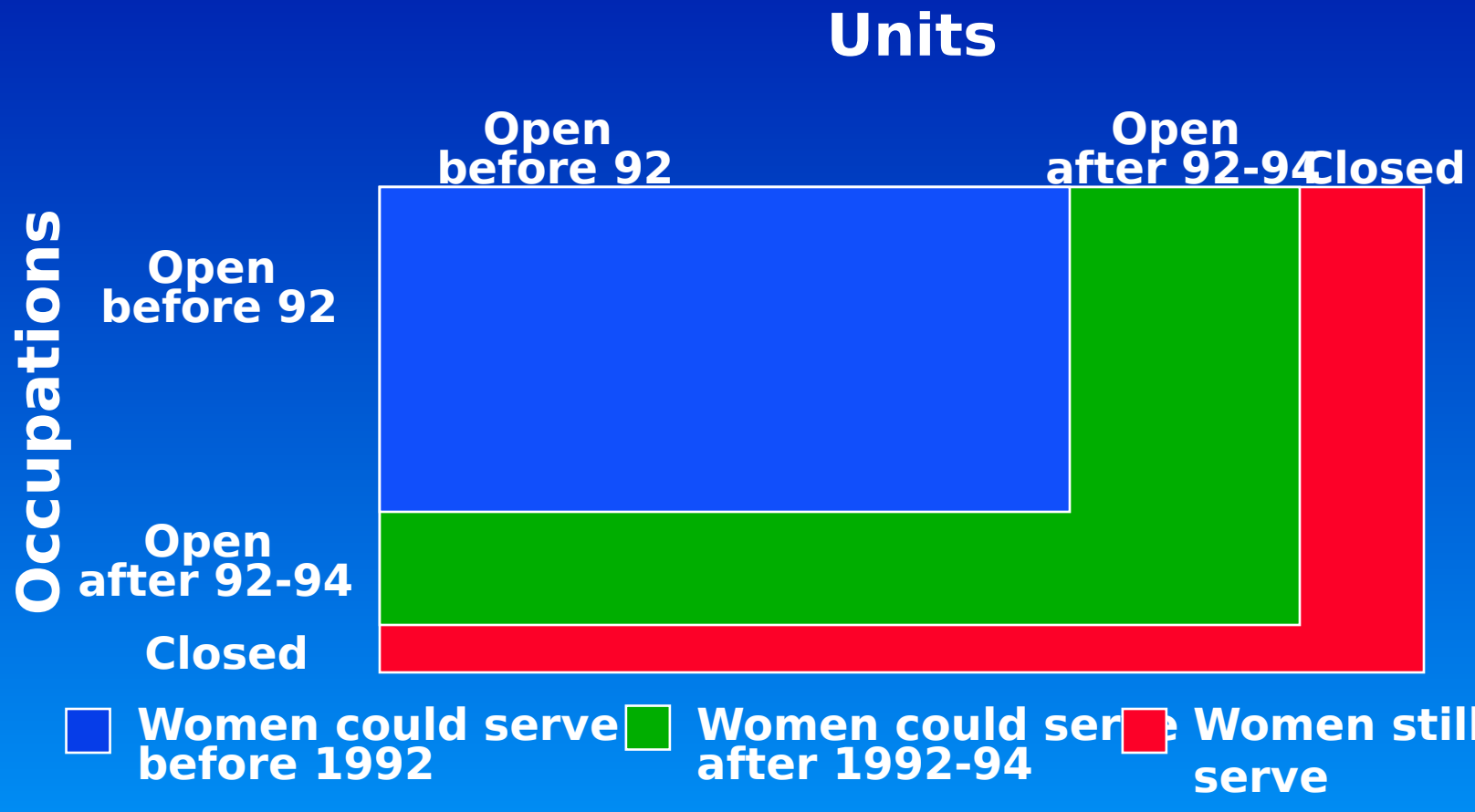
New Opportunities for Military Women

Effects on Readiness, Cohesion, and Morale

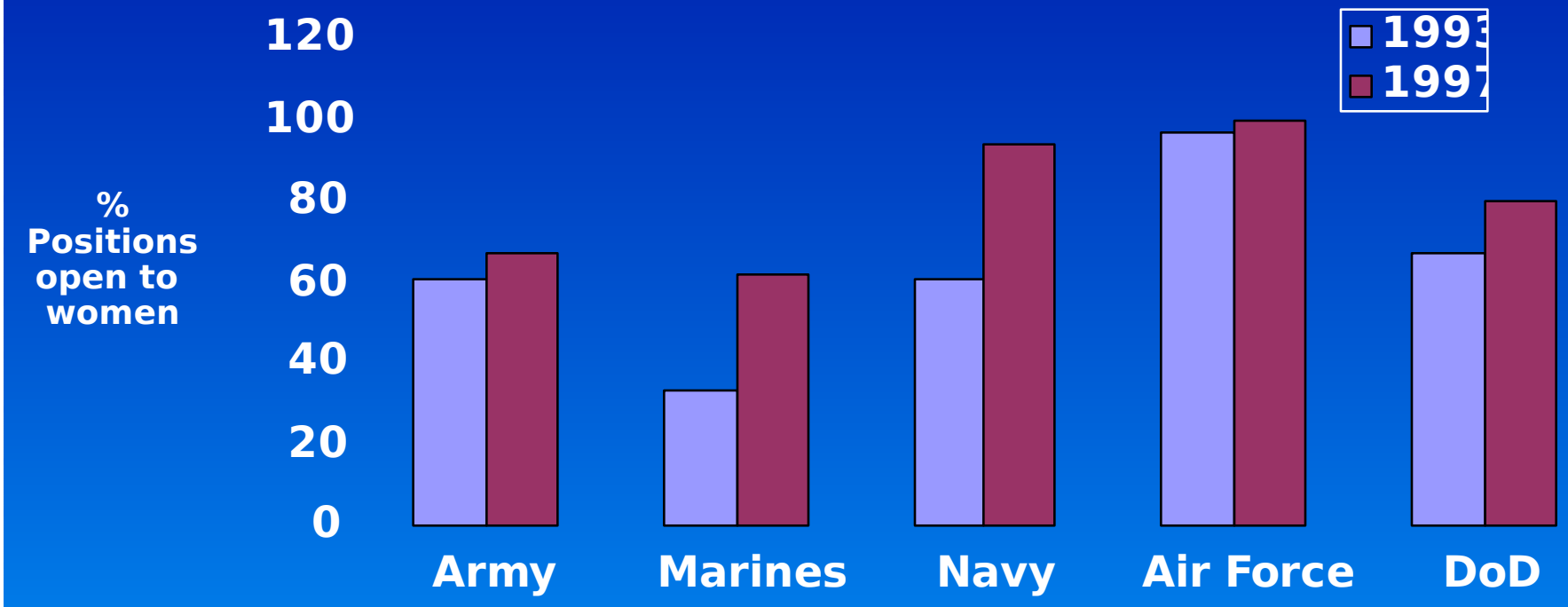
Margaret C. Harrell, Laura L. Miller

1997

Changes Affected Unit and Occupation Assignments



All Services Opened More Positions to Women

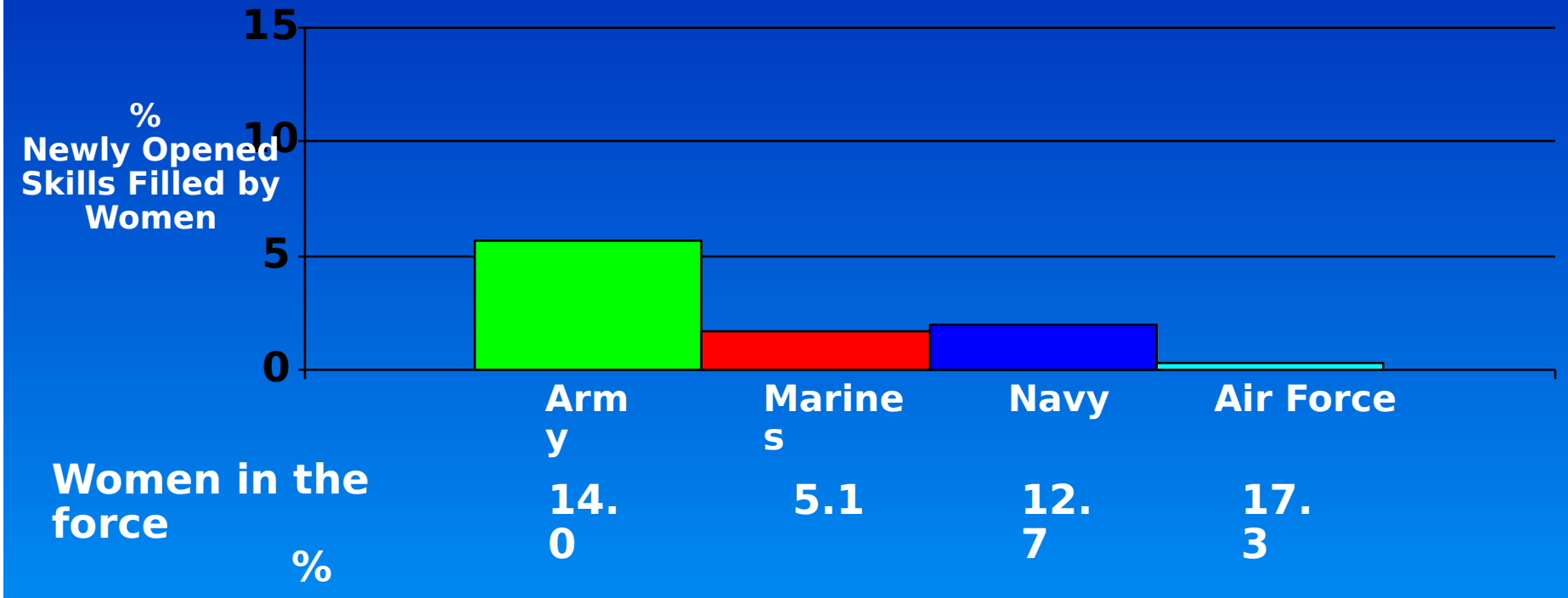


RAND

Opening New Units Had More Effect Than Opening New Skills

- **Newly opened units usually can immediately accept women trained in occupations they're authorized**
- **Actual assignment of women hard to track in Army and Marine units because of data limitations**
- **Easier to track assignment of women to newly opened ships**
  - **400 female officers (12%)**
  - **3,157 enlisted women (6%)**

Percentage of Women in Newly Opened Skills Is Still Small



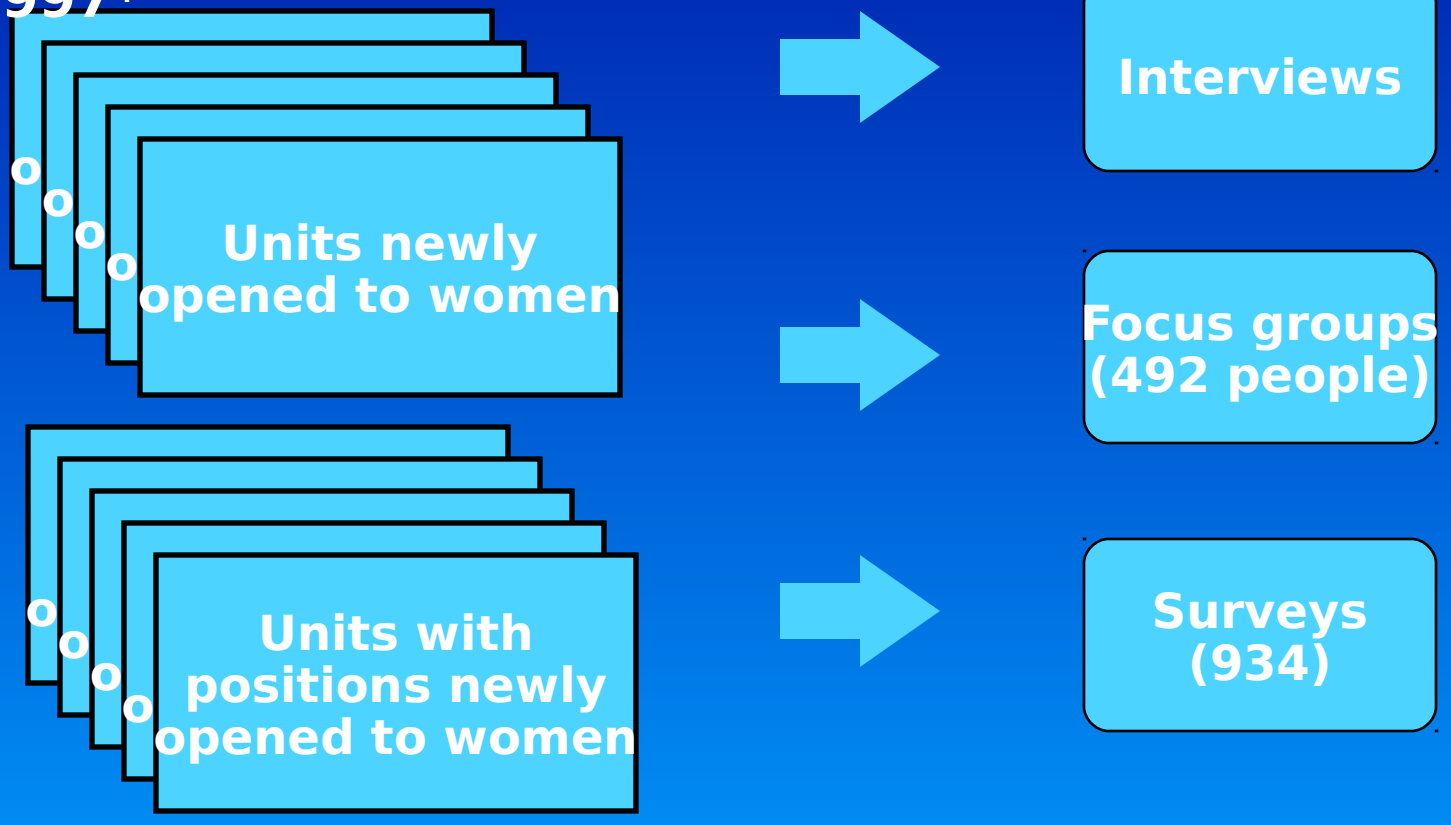
	Army	Marines	Navy	Air Force
Women in the force %	14.0	5.1	12.7	17.3

Both Policy and Informal Limitations Remain

- **Policy limits include ground combat and berthing restrictions**
- **Commanders discretion in how to use their personnel can lead to informal policies that limit where womenwork**
  - **Units thought to be “too close to direct combat”**
  - **Occupational duties, e.g., mechanic serving in administrative position**
  - **Certain jobs (aides, drivers) to avoid any possibility of a harassment charge**
  - **Jobs locally restricted to combat occupations (e.g., drill instructors limited to infantry)**

We Used Multiple Methods to Assess Effects Of Gender Integration on Affected Units

We visited 14 units in May 1997*

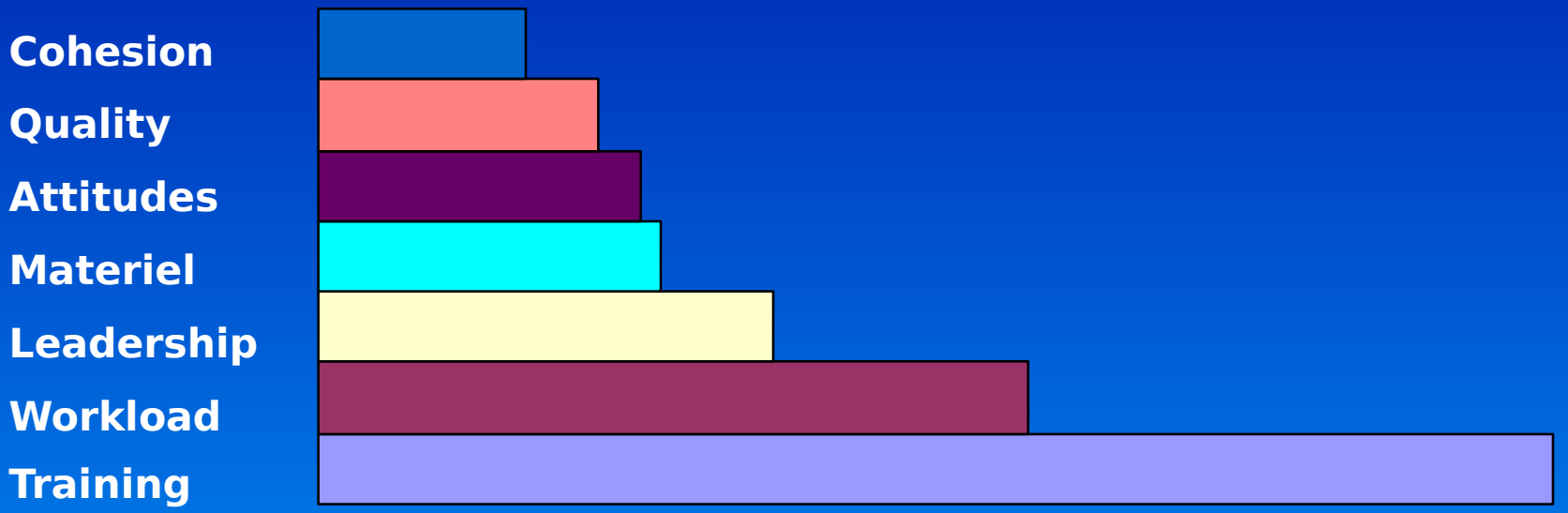


* Did not visit Air Force units

Gender Integration Does Not Decrease Readiness

"What Affects Your Unit's Readiness?"

(2 comments of 515 mention gender effect)



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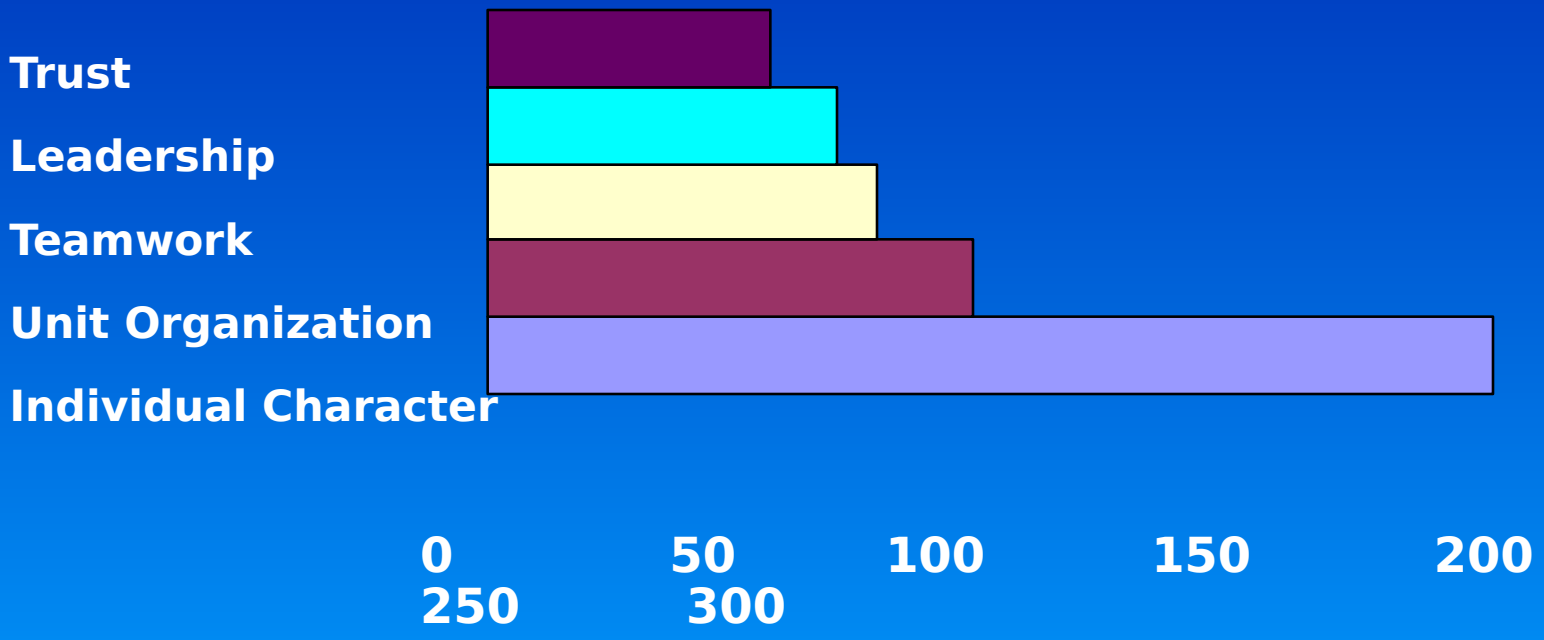
Gender Integration Does Not Erode Cohesion

"What Affects Your Unit's Cohesion?"

(10 comments of 619 mention gender effect)



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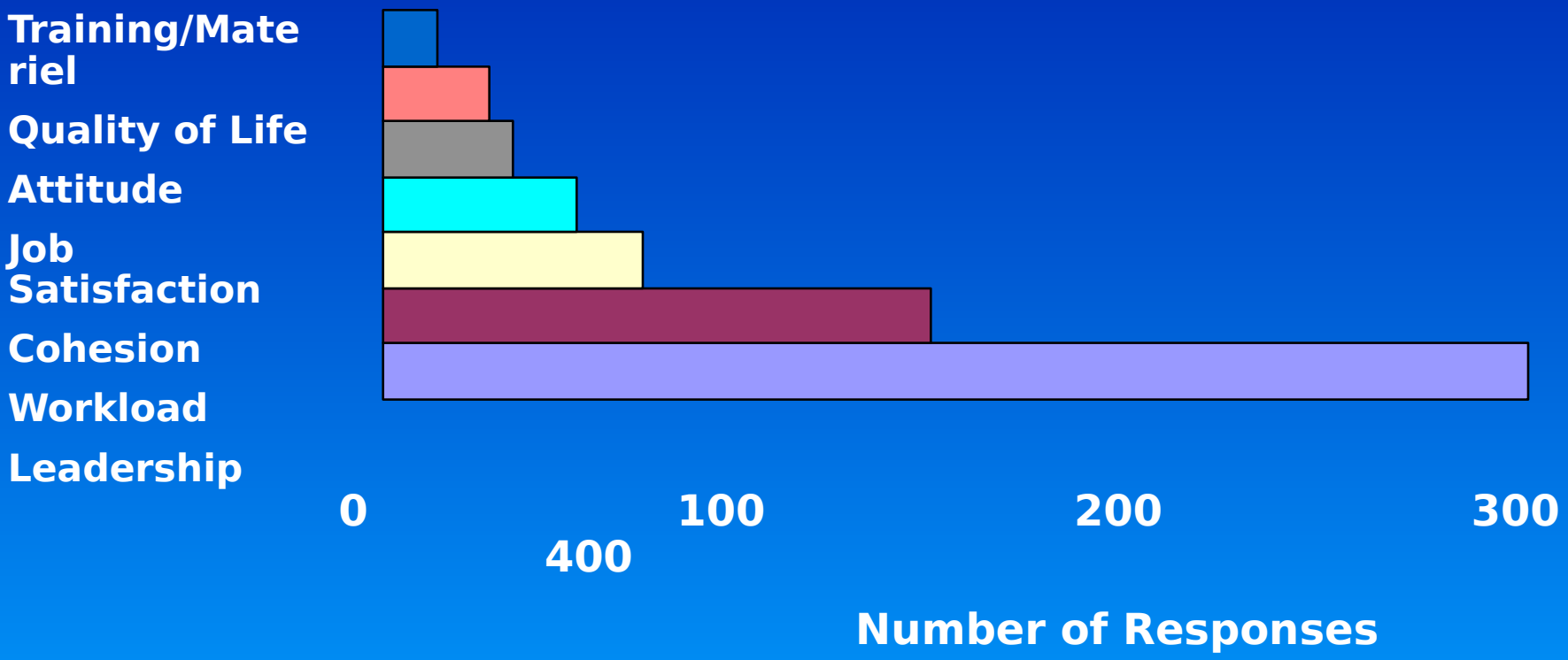
Leadership--Not Gender--Determines Morale

"What Affects Your Unit's Morale?"

(8 comments of 805 mention gender effect)



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Opinions Vary About Combat Exclusions

- **Men are split**
  - **-Officers** — **exclusion should remain**
  - **-Enlisted** — **retain the exclusion *or* assign women the same way men are assigned**
- **Women think the exclusion should go**
  - **Jr enlisted** — **combat ought to be voluntary**
  - **Officers & assigned sr enlisted** — **assign women the same way men are**

Conclusions

- **Women are moving into new units and occupations**
- **Perceived effect of gender integration on units is minor**
- **Services still in transition**
  - **Implementation of policy to open more positions still underway**
  - **More experience will be necessary for final assessment of recent policy changes**
  - **Attitudes of personnel about gender integration seem to be evolving**
  - **Service members believe current spotlight is unproductive**